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WOOD NOTES

MILDRED WHITNEY STILLMAN

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WOOD NOTES

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By
MILDRED WHITNEY STILLMAN

NEW YORK
DUFFIELD AND COMPANY
1922

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TO
MY MOTHER

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A number of these poems appeared in John Martin's Book, The Youth's Companion, The Churchman, The New York Evening Post, The New York Times, The Boston Transcript, and The Cornwall Press.

WOOD NOTES

IN THE NIGHT

The furry folk go out to feed
  In the night, when the woods are still.
The field mouse scurries to find her seed
  Over the snowy hill.

The rabbit bounds from his bush away,
  The skunk steals slowly to seek his prey,
And the fox slinks into the shadow gray,
  In the night, when the woods are still.

The snowflakes spread out a clean new sheet
  In the night, when the woods are still,
Where the field mouse dances on fairy feet,
  And the skunk plods on to kill.

And when iced trees glint in the morning glow,
  And woodsmen out to the forest go,
They read wee tragedies written in snow,
  In the night, when the woods are still.

APRIL

Come away into the springtime
For the brooks are running free,
And the blush is on the maple,
While the dainty willow tree
Swings her airy veil of yellow
To the calm adoring stream,
And within his faithful mirror,
Sees her own reflection gleam.

Come away into the woodland,
For the bold skunk cabbage rise,
And hepaticas have opened
Childhood's wonder-widened eyes,
And the forest flower of Easter,
Red as blood and white as snow,
Thrusts up through the spongy leaf mould,
Where the polypodies grow.

APRIL

Come away and hear the spring-song
  That the nesting blue-birds sing,
Hear the water thrushes carol
  Where the alder tassels swing,
And when misty evening hushes
  Beast and bird with stilling wand,
Hear the love song of the peepers
  From the meadow pond!

SPRING

His men were laying my garden wall,
"Love, love," the bright birds calling,
Tassels hung light on the maples tall,
And daffodil leaves, green candles of spring,
Pierced bravely up, while each shovel swing
Sent the brown earth falling, falling,
Thud, thud, on stone and mud,
The brown earth falling, falling.

The gray head mason watched his men,
"Love, love," the birds were calling,
While stone on stone they laid again,
He turned his weathered face toward me,
"Could you use a Paisley Shawl?" said he,
Soft earth so softly falling.

I knew the man and his workmen all,
"Love, love," the bright birds calling,

They had built me many a strong, straight wall,
And I answered indulgently, liking him well,
"Do you know of a Paisley Shawl to sell?"
  Soft, soft the brown earth falling.

Then over his face a strange shade came,
  "Love, love," the sweet birds calling,
I could have bitten my tongue for shame,
So strangely, and proudly he answered, "No!
My wife died fifteen years ago"—
  Down, down the dull earth falling.
Spring in each bud—and thud on thud,
  The brown earth falling, falling.

THE WILD CANARY

From the elm tree's lightest spray,
  Where the tassel buds are swinging,
Floats a merry roundelay,
  Hark! the wild canary singing.

Down the liquid music trills—
  Where the gay forsythia showers
Golden stars, and daffodils
  Prank the wall with yellow flowers.

All the joy the blossoms bring,
  Trembles in his lilting note.
All the sunshine of the spring
  Gushes from his throbbing throat!

MAY

Above the rushing of the brooks
  The winds of heaven roar by,
And drive the cloud flotillas far
  Across the rainless sky.

Along the old Bog Meadow Road
  The airy dogwood gleams,
And little yellow violets stand
  Knee deep in swollen streams.

Young brake unroll their downy fronds
  Beside the trickling run,
And every plumy, feathered tree,
  Is nodding to the sun.

PANSIES

Pansies, pensées, little thoughts in flower,
Tender fancies sprung to life
In the twilight hour.
Hopes—too subtle for confession
Dreams—too sweet to find expression—
Far too shy, for human ear,
Touched the ground, and blossomed here.

STILLWOOD

To G. T.

When hollyhocks are blooming
  Beside the low front door,
Then come to us at Stillwood,
  And stay a week or more.

The roses by the garden path
  Will thrill you through and through,
And I will put the reddest rose
  In a sea-green vase for you.

And you shall have the gray-green room,
  With windows looking down,
Over the river valley,
  Beyond the hidden town.

A room as cool as willows,
  With woodwork white as snow,
A table by the little bed,
  And an armchair light and low.

And through the western window
  Will float the faintest breeze,
And you will see the sun go down,
  Behind the maple trees.

You will see the sun go down
  And hear the wood-thrush call,
And smell the briar roses,
  That scramble on the wall,

The wilful briar roses,
  That clever gardeners prune,—
Oh! come to us at Stillwood
  And make a double June!

COUNTRY LULLABY

When the round red sun is sinking in the west—
in the west,
Then the baby robins snuggle in their nest—in
their nest,
And the father robin sings, and the mother spreads
her wings,
Saying, "Cuddle little birdies to my breast—to
my breast."

When the farm horse falls a-dozing in his stall—
in his stall,
And the puppy dog has curled up in a ball—in a
ball,
Then the little crickets peep, "Children, children
go to sleep,
For the stars will soon be shining on us all—on
us all!"

NOCTURNE

O! Velvet night, with swiftly rushing breezes,
Rushing breezes whispering among the restless trees,
O! Precious night! How welcome thy releases
From all the glaring garishness the bright day sees.

Now the dark hills are soft as purple pansies,
Now the river meadows shimmer misty gray,
Fireflies flicker by, as vagrant as our fancies,
And the crawling night boat glimmers on its way.

SUMMER

Breathless!
The heavy maple hangs her listless leaves,
The rambler blossom droops beneath the eaves,
The sulky hen walks silently and slow,
The cows crawl homeward with their heads held
low,
Dejected, limp, the pastured horses stand,
Heat's curse is on the land.

Then light,
Like the flip of a fair lady's fan,
Stirs a flutter of breeze,
In the tips of the trees,
And below,
As the harder puffs blow,
All the branches swing slow,
Turning up the dull green
Till the silver is seen.

SUMMER

Wild, wild,
Swoops the wind down the draw in the hills,
Where it riots and spills,
On the grass and the flowers;
Languid, drooping for hours,
All the maples swing high,
As the squall rushes by,
With a screech and a wail,
And the rose petals sail
On the wings of the gale,
Over barnyard and town,
Till they falter—die down.

Then, in a gust,
On the dry lawn and dust,
Like food for the hungry, like sleep after pain,
Sweeps the rain!

STRAWBERRIES

Have you seen the Fairy lanterns in the July
fields,
Mid the sunshine and the fragrance that the long
grass yields,
Lest some elf should go astray
From the shortest, surest way,
To the banquets where the fiddler crickets play?

In the nighttime you can see their tiny crimson
glow
In the grasses tawny forest, everywhere you go,
For the firefly with his light,
Touches each and makes it bright,
And they glimmer, glimmer, glimmer through the
night.

Sometimes I wonder how 'twould be if you or I,
When the baby moon is swinging in the evening sky,
Should just creep right out of bed
To those bits of flaming red,
And then, follow, follow, follow where they led.

Do you think we'd see the fairy folk upon their way,
Where the elfin court is gathered for a banquet gay?
And upon a mushroom chair,
With a wand of maiden hair,
We should watch the fairy princess o'er her court hold sway?

WATER LILY

(Mac Dowell)

Floating, floating on the dark lake waters
Pallid gleaming, through the dusky night,
What though the mire around my feet is clinging?
Lo! My heart opens, fragrant, pure and white.

Waiting, waiting, on the still lake waters,
Yearning, yearning—art thou coming soon?
Wilt thou shine upon me most beautiful enchantress?
Hasten, hasten, lovely Lady Moon!

COBWEBS

We worked until the east flushed red,
And found, when we were through,
A mesh of cobwebs spread around,
Spun out across the grassy ground,
  Cobwebs two by two—
Just where our clumsy feet must pass,
Cobwebs swinging on the grass,
  Glistening with dew.

CORNWALL

Yellow leaves are falling, falling
  On the dewy ground.
Chickadees are calling, calling
  In the woods around.

Storm King's glowing gold and purple
  Fades to sober brown,
And through swiftly thinning hedges
  Looms a larger town.

All too soon the sun is throwing
  Schunemunk in purples clear—
All too soon each day is going
  Of this golden year!

YELLOW LEAVES

The dew is on the eyelids of the sleeping morn,
No merry robin calls her mate among the golden trees,
The field mouse hurries harvesting between the shocks of corn,
And chipmunks gather winter stores beneath the hickories.

Along the Midas charmed woods, the happy children roam,
Where up the yellow chestnut trees, the yellow grapevines run,
The tawny caterpillar crawls to weave her winter home,
And crickets by the kitchen door await the tardy sun.

CHICKADEE

Leaves are filling up the gutters,
  Empty nests are swinging bare,
Song birds all have fled to southward
  From the nipping autumn air.
    But I see, on a tree,
  Plump and round with jollity,
A merry little breakfaster a-chirping, "Chicka-
      dee!"

He's a saucy little fellow
  In his sober black and gray,
And he hails the passing squirrels
  With a chirp that seems to say,
    "How d'ye-do? How d'ye-dee?
    Oh! I'm very glad to see
All my friends so well and happy—very happy,
      Chickadee!"

He chuckles at the empty nest
A-swinging up so high.
He quirks his funny tufted head,
And gives a merry cry,
"O-ho! The season's over,
Summer guests have gone away.
I'm not afraid of frosty nights,
I'm here—and here to stay
Chickadee! Chickadee—day—day—day!"

NOVEMBER

When dull November drags across the sky,
  Fold after fold of massive mournful cloud,
When from the lanky pine, the last crows cry,
  And shutters rattle in the East wind loud.

When old nests totter on the empty trees,
  And garden beds are rough and black and bare,
And only squirrels and gray chickadees
  Still search the hedgerow for their meager fare.

When the sad wind draws down the sadder hills,
  Moaning the sweetness of the summer dead,
Wailing the cruelty of frost that kills,
  Sighing for song birds far, far southward fled,

Then look! Along the faster flowing rills,
Already maple buds are purple red!

COON HUNT

Slam, slash, stumble in the pitch, black trees,
  Crash, crunch, crumble on the brook-beds dry.
Oak leaves rattle in the cold night breeze,
  Wild clouds gallop from the green north sky.
Hound dog howling, up the West Point Road,
  Hoot owl "whooing" at the cold white moon.
Ten men panting with their guns on the load,
  Old Jim Babcock is out for a coon!

ABOVE SUTHERLAND'S POND

Ridge after ridge, the rough hills roll away,
The near ones brown, and then a purple hue,
And further yet a faint and fainter blue,
Until the last long plateau well might be
The pale horizon of a distant sea,
Serenely shining on a summer day.

We hear the wind sweep through the empty skies,
And far off, from the hidden river plain,
The muffled rumble of a rushing train—
Then quiet. Not one bird with little trills
Disturbs the solemn silence of the hills.
The hills—so wild and lonely, who would say
That from this rock scarce fifty miles away,
A panting, throbbing, seething city lies!

WYOMING

In the meadow marshes, where the bull elk wallow,
In the fallen timber, where the pheasant breeds,
There's a subtle magic, luring us to follow,
Where the printed deer track, to the stream bed leads.

Not for me the rifle, not the bullet dealing
To the woodland creatures suffering and death.
Mine the haunted voices, through the forest stealing,
Mine the quickened pulses, and the deeper breath.

Mine a sense of oneness, with each wild thing near me—
Paw, and wing and antler, moss and flower and tree—
I would dwell among them till they cease to fear me—
In a sweet primeval, Eden harmony.

SNOW IN THE ROCKIES

Out of the air a cloud
  Subtle and soft and slow—
Wreathing us in a shroud
  From the hills and the valleys below,
Out of the air a cloud—
  And out of the cloud—snow!

Snow so gentle and still
  That the fire sings loud and high,
Snow so white on the grass on the hill
  That the earth is as light as the sky,
Flake by flake on the grasses until
  The earth is as pure as the sky.

Far, far from the earth we seem
  While the dense cloud curtain's bar,
Bar us away like a soul in a dream,
  From the world of things that are,
Far, far from the world of man we seem
  Near to the realm of the star!

SARANAC

On the lake blue waves are dancing
  In the morning breeze—
Every dainty leaflet trembles
  On the white birch trees.

In the cove beyond the pine woods,
  Where white water lilies gleam,
Winding, creeping, semi-sleeping,
  Flows a little stream.

CONCORD RIVER

Dip . . . swing
Glistening blade,
Cleaving the waters through!
Glide . . . gleam
Over the stream,
Gracefully, my canoe!
Willows are leaning to look in the glass,
Cows never raising their heads as we pass.
Calm . . . still
Lo! yonder hill
Sleepeth beneath the blue.

FOG ON SARGENT

The wind is hushed, the waves grow still,
The fog slides in across the hill,
Shrouding the landing, wreathing the town,
Billowing up on the sides of Brown.

Like wild merchildren forth at play,
The first gay vapors stream away,
Over the Hadlocks, and up the Sound,
Skirting the feet of the hills around.

The balsams melt into misty gray,
A white wall shuts the world away,
And the giant rocks on Sargent loom,
Grim and grand in the pearly gloom.

And below the cliffs where birches gleam,
Long branches drip into the stream,
The salt dew wets the fern's green feather,
Sea and mountain are met together.

ON WESTERN MT.

A rosy bloom spreads over bare old Sargent,
Long purple shadows fall across the trees,
That rank on rank press up the mountain's shoulders,
And row on row, reach outward to the seas.

The calm of heaven rests over the pale narrows
And stills the placid sweep of Blue Hill bay,
Only the line of white on Bunker's Ledges
Breaks the pure mirror of the Western way.

The Western way, white flecked with tiny sail boats,
Slow homeward drifting on the tide's full stream,
Past wooded shores of deep mysterious islands,
And lighthouse towers like castles in a dream.

And here, beside me on the granite ledges
  Where rude and free, young eagles might reside
Here on the cliff, a fairy garden blossoms
  Filling a cranny on the mountain's side.

One hair-bell, purple as the morning ocean,
  Sea golden-rod, more yellow than the sun,
And tender moss, and slender polypodies,
  Along the tiny crevice gayly run.

I think when Beauty passed across the island,
  Breathing charmed breath upon the waters clear,
Raising her mighty wings above the mountains,
  A little feather fell, and lighted here.

ZERMATT

You seem the whitest thing on earth
Monta Rosa!—wrapped in snow!
So pure, so high—but what a dearth
Of life and warmth—the glaciers slow
Crawl down your surface old,
So lonely—and so cold!

CAUX-SUR-TERRITET

A small boat rests at anchor in the lake,
Whose blue, unruffled by the restless wake,
Mirrors the shining sail.

And waiting for the day not yet begun,
The lake lies placid, with the rising sun
Kissing her visage pale.

Come let us linger—by this ancient tree,
And watch the smoke that curls so drowsily
Above the sleeping town.

For hush! the very mountain is at rest.
A weary cloud is cradled on his breast
So scarred and bare and brown!

THE CHILDREN

MAGNIFICAT

God, who hast given me all,
  Since life began,
All of the laughter and love
  Of the years' short span—
Till I thought that the best gift was given,
  And the highest good—
Lo! and Thou offerest now
  Motherhood!

PROMISE

Are you trying to call me, my wee one,
  Are you restless to be free?
Do you beat on the walls of your prison,
  To be out in the world with me?

So close I enfold you, my wee one,
  A bud with petals curled;
Soon only my arms shall hold you
  Away from the wide, wide, world.

And then you will leave my arms, darling,
  And then you will run from my side—
Oh! let the weeks linger, my wee one,
  So safely you now abide!

JANE

As I watch your rosy, sleeping face,
  And feel your soft head pressed
In the curved hollow of my arm,
  And your hand lie on my breast,

Light seems the weariness and pain
  I bore for you last year—
Gone like the memory of a dream,
  Now that I hold you here!

THE NESTLING

We have a little turtle-dove,
With round blue eyes,
Her nest is on the window-sill,
Beneath the skies.

Cuddled down in afghans white,
There she lies from morn till night,
Watching every cloudlet
In grave surprise.

Oftentimes we hear her give
A merry coo,
To ask a passing birdie,
"Who are you?

If you fly so far and high,
Why must I so quiet lie?
I should like to flutter
With you too."

BAFFLED

Soft limbed little mystery,
Little we know—with all our care,
How wise the food that we prepare—
How best to give you sun and air.

Sometimes your eyes so solemn blue—
Will seem to quiz me through and through,
As though to say "You, poor fool, you!"

THE OTHERS

She will lie for an hour, when her nap is done,
  In her wide white crib alone,
And croon and gurgle to herself,
  And smile at each merry tone.

Till I wonder if she is talking there,
  To someone I can not see—
Someone she played with in the air,
  Before she came down to me.

It may be her brothers and sisters come
  To see the eldest here,
Eager to learn of their future home
  With flutterings of fear.

And she gurgles so contentedly,
  And smiles with such merry pride,
I am sure she is telling them all is well,
  That our arms are open wide.

CUDDLE DOWN

Little white bird, with the soft flannel breast,
Cuddle down, cuddle down, into your nest,
Hands never idle, the merry day through,
Faithful rag dolly is waiting for you,
Press your hot cheek on her cool gingham breast,
Cuddle down, cuddle down, into your nest.

Soft in the nursery and loud in the hall,
Little shoes trotted from window to wall,
Now the limp stockinged feet, plead for their rest,
Cuddle down, cuddle down, in your warm nest.

Eyes wide with wonder from morning till night,
Draw the fringed curtains now, in the dim light,
Smooth out protesting lips, mother knows best,
Cuddle down, cuddle down, into your nest.

GODMOTHER

The godmothers came in olden days,
With fairy gifts to the cradle side,
They brought there beauty, and kindly ways,
And grace, and other charms beside.

And perhaps if you laid your hand on my brow,
And left there wishes three,
The fairies would listen, and even now,
Would bring those wishes to me.

Perhaps if you wished me your gentle eyes,
And your smile so kind and true,
The fairies would listen, and bye-and-bye,
I should grow just like you!

THE FAVORITE

Said the rubber dog with the long straight tail
To the duck with the emerald breast,
"You are very lovely to look upon,
But the baby loves me best."

For she takes my whole head in her mouth,
And I patiently let her chew,
And suck and bite with all her might,
To help her teeth come through."

Said the emerald duck, "She would never dare
Do such a thing to me,
But she finds me floating in her bath,
And laughs and crows with glee."

"I'll tell you what," said the rubber dog,
"Let us together stand,
On the bureau top, and see which one,
She first takes in her hand."

So they took their stand on the bureau top,
And stood there side by side,
The dog held his tail up straight and high,
And the green duck swelled with pride.

Then the baby came on her nurse's arm,
And their hearts went pit-a-pat,
The baby did not glance at them,
She was hugging the worsted cat!

THE SQUIRREL

Little squirrel, in the ramble,
  Is your nose as cold as mine?
Don't you find it very draughty,
  Where the tree tops intertwine?

Little squirrel, with no mittens,
  Don't your fingers ache with cold?
Did your hair turn gray as grandpa's
  Just because you are so old?

Are you never thirsty, squirrel,
  From the food you have to eat?
Or are peanuts just as juicy
  As my bowl of cream of wheat?

HOMEWARD BOUND

When winds blow chill, on the mall and the lake,
And clouds gather dreary and dark,
Like a flock of white sea-birds, that scurry ashore,
The babies come home from the Park.

The brisk nurses hasten, the slender wheels whirl,
And beneath the warm worsteds and silk,
Each little heart beats with a pang and a thrill,
At the thought of hot porridge and milk.

The limousines spin through the late afternoon,
They crowd in the gathering dark,
But their long line must wait at the Avenue gate,
While the babies come home from the Park.

CITY LULLABY

Good-night my baby girl,
  The city streets grow bright,
Each lamp-post holds a lantern,
  And each window holds a light.

The dusky limousines
  Speed on their homeward way,
And high above the tower,
  Blooms soft the fading day.

Here in the darkening room,
  We throw the windows wide,
And draw the crib-clothes down
  And tuck you snug, inside—

A cozy flannel ball,
  Among the covers white—
Good-night my baby girl,
  God keep you all the night!

CALVIN

The robin sits upon her nest,
  In the pine tree by the swing,
With blue-green eggs beneath her breast,
  She has no time to sing.

The tulips by the garden wall
  Hold chalices of red,
And my dear boy who loves them all
  Must lie in his white bed.

The violets and anemones
  Have starred the pasture gay,
White apple blossoms load the breeze
  With honeyed breath of May.

What care I, if flowers grow,
  And fairy perfumes shed,
When my dear boy who loves them so
  Must lie in his white bed?

But I will seek them all for him,
  Each tender, winsome thing,
That blossoms by the wood-lot rim,
  And paves the path of spring.

And I'll bring home the fragrant pile
  Of flowers white and red,
And then my little boy will smile,
  As he lies in his white bed.

SCIENCE

Mother, do you know what?
Mother, do you know what?
Water is a pick and shovel.

Mother, do you know what?
Mother, do you know what?
Water is a pick and shovel.

Because it digs out ditches wide,
And rolls rocks down the mountain side,
Because it digs the ditches wide,
Water *is* a pick and shovel.

THE CROUP KETTLE

The incense burns to that malignant joss,
  Who visits croup on little boys and girls,
The humid, benzoin-laden atmosphere
  Dampens the hot-browed victim's yellow curls.

And while his burning fingers reach for mine,
  And vise-like, close about my cooler hand,
His heavy eyes are dumbly questioning
  The torment that he can not understand.

Then low and lower droop the tired lids,
  The curling lashes sweep
The crimson cheeks, as some more kindly god
  Has drawn him into even-breathing sleep.

THE HOOT OWL

God of little children who sees us through the night,
As if it were the pleasant light of day,
Although the corners grow so black,
When nurse turns out the light,
And mother's room is very far away.

God of little children, who brings the stars all out,
And in the nursery window bids them peep,
Please ask that ugly hoot owl,
To stop his dismal shout,
He sounds so lonesome that I cannot sleep.

FAITH

"When I was away from you, last night,
Did you say your prayers when you went to bed?"
Calvin looked up with his slow, sweet smile.
"I just forgot," he said.

"Oh! Calvin, I fear that God was hurt,
Just as I should be,
If some night you went off to bed
Without your kiss for me."
But Calvin still smiled placidly,
"God knew I was sleepy," said he.

THE STAR

The evening star shone all alone,
  O'er the hill, where the pine trees are.
My little boy looked up at me—
  "Is that God's service star?
  Did He send His son to the war?"
"Long years ago," I said,
  "In Bethlehem, His service star
Stood over a cattle shed."

GRANDFATHER

Last night I dreamed that you came here to see
Our little new-born boy, so silently
You stood beside his curtained crib and smiled,
Just as you used to smile, when Calvin played
Around your room on winter afternoons.

And with you came your friend,
Who went through life and laid down life with
you;
The night lamp shone upon his silver hair,
And rosy face, as he stooped low to see
The little boy who bears his name and yours.

It seemed most sweet and natural, you and he
Together here, and speaking not a word,
Far too distinct and natural for a dream,
And so I love to think that you have seen
This baby too—and love him as the rest.

JOHNNY

You are so soft and lissome Johnny dear,
Lying along my arm, close nestled here,
Soothing your hunger in the sweet, old way.

The good old way, God gave to baby man,
Long ages back, when first the world began,
And Eve nursed Abel at the break of day.

In the deep joy of those fresh morning hours,
I think that she forgot lost Eden's flowers.

THE PINE PILLOW

Held safe by white enameled bars,
  Little Johnny sleeps.
Above the flowered coverlid,
  His pink nose peeps.

Upon his rosy forehead
  Slender curls lie damp,
And the pale light reaches to them
  From the round street lamp.

As I bend down low above him,
  Tucking covers tight,
The warm, sweet breath of fir trees
  Fills me with delight.

The smell of Northeast fir trees
  In the forests old,
From the pudgy balsam pillow
  That his hot arms hold.

MY DAFFODILL

When Johnny wears his yellow suit,
  Around his neck a frill,
And frills around his tender arms,
  He is my daffodil.

My laughing daffodil, who lights
  The room with April joy,
My winning elf, my Ariel,
  Half blossom and half boy.

BED-TIME

Come, little boy, in chambray blue,
Mother is waiting for you.
Lead the gray elephant back to the ark,
The lion so golden, the camel so dark,
Lay them down carefully, each cherished toy,
Bed-time has come, little boy.

Dear, lissome cherub, all rosy and white,
Bathed and powdered and clothed for the night,
I draw up the neck of your fleecy nightgown,
And over your pink toes, the long folds fall down,
Down on my shoulder then goes your soft head,
As you go riding away to your bed.

The windows are open, the shutters are drawn,
The fresh evening breezes slip in from the lawn,
So comfy and cosy my little boy lies,
While the sandman comes stealing to close his
brown eyes.
God pity the great folk in palaces bred,
Who never have put their own babies to bed!

THE SEA

THE SLOOP

Up she goes on a big wave's shoulder
  Down she goes in the trough of the sea,
Little she recks of the silver rollers
  Light as a petrel and just as free.

Smack in her face blows the smart sou'wester
  Filling her mains'l and creaking her mast
Little cares she for the brisk wind's bluster
  Safe as a petrel and just as fast.

THE LAUBSTER BOAT

The sou'west wind is breezin' up along the western way,
It's chaupy in the narrows, I heard a speed boat say,
I'm only jest a laubster chug, I get there anyway.
Chug-a-chug-a-chug-a-chug-a-chug.

Out into the chaup
With a rattle and a haup
Spray sheet all a-slaup
Chug-a-chug!

The little lads in naukabaouts are coming to the lea,
The ladies in slim motor boats are frightened by the sea,
But laubstermen, and laubsterboats, for weather, what care we?
Chug-a-chug-a-chug-a-chug-a-chug.

THE LAUBSTER BOAT

Out the Western way
Where the porpoise play,
Nosin' off the spray
Chug-a-chug!

I prob'ly ain't so dainty when lyin' at the slip,
Like all them cocky summer boats thet every sea can tip,
But wait until rough weather comes, I'm good for any trip.
Chug-a-chug-a-chug-a-chug-a-chug.

When the buoys toll,
When the ground swells roll
Over bunker shoal
Chug-a-chug!

SEA LULLABY

Under white bows, little waves lapping
Under gray skies, grayer sails flapping,
On crimson cushions, my little girl napping
Lazily, lazily napping.

Far off a yawl, the dark island hugging
Far off a fisher boat chugging and chugging
Dreamy salt air, my little girl drugging
Drowsily, drowsily drugging.

Over slate sea, one slate winged gull flying
Over green cove, one hungry gull crying,
Soundly asleep, my little girl lying
Quietly, quietly, lying.

TIDE

Relentlessly, relentlessly
The tide swells in from the deep sea.

Relentlessly, and shock on shock
The wave swings in upon the rock,
The waters croon and purl and hiss,
As weedy stone they coldly kiss.

Relentlessly, relentlessly
The tide swells in from the deep sea.

It lifts the buoys and the floats,
And swings the little tethered boats,
And skiffs drawn high upon the beach,
Are floated from their owner's reach.

Relentlessly, relentlessly
The tide swells in from the deep sea.

And yet the ocean's dreaded powers,
Must keep appointed bounds and hours,
And day by day, and night and noon,
The sea is guided by the moon.
The pallid moon, far, far away,
Holds the great ocean in her sway.

Relentlessly, relentlessly
She draws the waters of the sea.

CARPENTERIA

Above the rosy crescent beach
  The purple mountains rise,
A sharply jagged silhouette,
  Against the salmon skies.

The green waves break in violet
  Upon the rosy sand,
And one last wingéd wanderer—
  Seeks shelter on the land.

BAKER'S BEACH

Still the mighty waves strike dashing
  As of old, upon the sand,
Wildly lashing, fiercely crashing
  In their war against the land.

With the wind's great force above them,
  And the current's force below,
Still they scourge the reefs and ledges,
  Strive to bring the great cliffs low.

THE CROSSING

In the calm of a rosy afternoon
The dimpling channel lay,
And the French shore faded all too soon,
With the roof-tops of Calais.
For I left my heart in that sunny land
And it broke when I went away!

THOUGHTS

SNOW

How beautifully snow fell to-day,
On Stillwood's little hill,
How indistinct the pasture lay—
How far, and faint and still.

Here on the slimy city street,
Where car and truck and motor meet,
Snow only falls to wet our feet.

It only falls to wet our feet,
And to impede the way,
Break wheels, and springs, and muddle things
As long as it shall stay.

I wonder as I walk to-night,
And watch the city's dismal plight,
How anything in town stays white?

WITH A PIPE

When the fireside seat is sought
And the blue fumes, fragrance fraught
  Slowly rise,
May the giver's face be brought
  To thine eyes.

PARK AVENUE

To F. W. R.

Crash and clatter, rattle and roar—
Trains dash rumbling by my door,
Under the windows but hid from view,
By the lilac shrubs on the avenue.
I hear them pass and I know they go
Out from the bondage of ice and snow—
Out towards the sunset's dying glow.
I am glad that the long tracks are hid from view
That lead to you!

LINES

I used to love the joyous cry,
  The eager word, the swift embrace,
The gay responsive smile that flew
  Like sunshine o'er the face.

But one long glance of thy calm eyes,
  Such soundless depth of feeling shows,
That knowing thee, I learn to prize
  The strength beneath repose.

DOLORES

Not only in her face,
Where subtle shadows trace
The long hours spent with haunted, sleepless eyes,
Nor in her lips set line,
Although so sad a sign
That in her heart she walks the bridge of sighs.

But I have seen her stand,
When just her white-gloved hand
Lay limp with such despairing lassitude,
With hopelessness so drear,
I wonder, year by year,
How life to one so frail, can be so rude.

J. S.

You call him great—who hear how he has swayed
Great forces with the power of his mind.
You know the place and riches he has made,
And see cold printed pictures of his face;
And say, "He has outstripped us in the race,
Because he thrust the weaker ones behind,"
And so with jealousy and smouldering hate,
You call him great.

But I have seen him in a merry crowd
Of laughing children in a village street,
Handing them goodies, while they clamored loud
For more—the panting motor standing by—
And mothers holding little toddlers high,
That their wee hands might have their share of sweet.
And he would fill the outstretched fingers, while
He watched them with a smile.

And I have watched deep lines of pain and care
Creep gradually around his weary eyes

Like patient Atlas, when he had to bear
The world upon his back, in days of yore,
So patiently *his* weighty tasks he bore,
That broke his strength and pulled him where
he lies.
You call him great—ah! if you understood
My father—call him good!

THE JAPAN SOCIETY EXHIBIT

One step from all the bustle of the street,
Here in the quiet mete,
The ancient treasures glisten in the gloom,
Pervading the gray room.

The sense of stress the strain,
That dulls the heart and dims the brain,
Are gone—and in their stead,
Calm reigns the spirit of an age long dead.

The gathered beauty of an Eastern land,
Sole witnesses of long-drawn secret toil,
Wrapped in gray mystery, here mutely stand,
Unearthed so lately from the sheltering soil.

Fashioned for Buddhist tomb and Shinto shrine,
With such pure zeal and sacrificial care,
That still they sanctify the gentile air,
Still radiate an atmosphere divine.

THE AUCTION

In an upper story, at Delmonico's,
An auctioneer was selling,
Hiroshiges and Kyonagas,
Prints delicate and rare,
Blue and tan and rose and yellow,
Geisha girls and Samurai,
Through them all the blue sea shining,
Or the snowy cone of Fuji,
Shell-like against the sky,
Ten, ten, ten, ten, ten, ten, ten, ten,
Fifteen, twenty—going at twenty,
Twenty, twenty, for this famous snow-scene,
Twenty-five, thirty, for this Hiroshige,
Forty, forty, going now at forty,
Fifty, fifty, fifty, fair warning, fifty,
Fifty—fifty, sold for fifty dollars!
To Mrs. Steele, there, over in the corner.

Here's a Kyonaga, now what is your pleasure?
Start it at one hundred. This fine print, one hundred,

Two hundred, three hundred, for this Kyonaga,
Four hundred, four hundred, going at four hundred,
Four hundred, four hundred, four hundred and fifty.

And at a meeting, just down the street,
They could not raise their quota
For Hoover's hungry children.
"The times, you know. The taxes!"

THE COSWAY MINIATURES

Morgan Collection

Beauties of another day!
  Prisoned in the jewelled gold,
Blossoms of a rare bouquet,
  Charms that never can grow old,
Gathered here in bright array,
  Tales of loveliness untold!

Dress in eighteen hundred style,
  Soft curls powdered white and gray,
Limpid eyes that still beguile,
  Hold us in their gentle sway.
Ladies, do you slyly smile?
  We have lost our hearts to-day!

HARVARD CONSERVATORY

When cloud-covered heavens are dismal and
dreary,
Dreary the city below
And alien hearts are all homesick and weary,
Weary of thawing and snow.

How soothing to wander amid these warm bowers,
Bowers where summer scents roam,
How dear is this haunt of the lost summer flowers,
Flowers that blossomed at home!

THE STATUE OF THE MINUTE MAN

The silent guarding trees alone surround
The sacred spot;
The growing village nears the holy ground—
And enters not.

There is no inharmonious sign to tell
Of modern ways,
No jarring note to break the gentle spell
Of ancient days.

But there beneath the skies that arch above
His solitude
Still stands the witness of a nation's love
And gratitude.

FIFTH AVENUE

So safe behind the shielding glass,
The laughing daffodils beguile
Long glances from the crowds that pass,
And little pansies smile,
While primrose pink and iris blue
And sweet mimosa beckon you,
Although the parks are bare and brown,
It's springtime on the avenue.

The merry morning sunbeams stream
On brim of straw and flowered crown,
And in the window yonder, gleam
White parasol, and filmy gown,
While with his globes red, green and blue,
The swart balloon man strides in view,
Although the parks are bare and brown,
It's springtime on the avenue.

BOYLSTON STREET

The Old South spire is purple
  On a heaven of flaming gold,
For the sun has sunk in the Fenway mist
  And the river wind blows cold.

The paths of the common grow crowded,
With shoppers hurrying home;
  And the shadow crawls
  Up the old brick walls
Till it reaches the State House Dome.

WESTMINSTER CHIMES

One more hour dies,
We toll its knell,
The next one flies
Oh! use it well!

SUNSET HYMN

(Air Seymour)

No roof shuts us from Thy sky,
  Lord God of the open air!
All Thy breezes passing by,
  Blow upon our foreheads bare.

As Thy manna fell of old,
  On the grass Thy fresh dews fall,
And the sunset's red and gold
  Sheds Thy glory over all.

Here, before the daylight dies,
  Heart and voice we raise to Thee,
From Thy vast and tranquil skies
  Send us Thy tranquillity.

CREDO

For those who can believe it,
  Escaped from creeds outworn,
In every new born baby
  A son of God is born.

COMMUNION HYMN

Air, St. Louis

How near He comes, how near He comes,
  How near to us to-day,
The Presence veiled, the mystery,
  The Being far away.

As cloud enfolds the mountain,
  As fog clings to the sea—
Far, far more near, He enters here,
  Is one with you and me.

Down through the thronging ages,
  From the legend-shrouded past,
From heart of man, to heart of man,
  He comes to us at last.

The bread once broken for us,
  In far-off Palestine,
Still feeds the soul, and makes it whole
  Your hunger heals and mine.

COMMUNION HYMN

The lonely man of sorrows,
  Who suffered long ago,
Must suffer still, and ever will,
  While human currents flow.

How near He comes, how near He comes,
  How near to us to-day,
To fold us in, from every sin,
  And make us His alway.

THE VISITOR

If Jesus came to earth to-day,
Where would he go, and what would he say?

Would he go to the city temples tall,
And worship in Mammon's gilded hall?

Or to the country churches white,
Where petty privilege plots with spite?

If Jesus came to earth to-day,
Where would he go? What would he say?

Perhaps he silently would go,
And slip back in some darkest row,

Among the constant hearted poor,
And they would feel his presence pure,

And the vestry in the foremost pews,
The sight of that dear Guest would lose.

CHRISTMAS EVE

What matters it, if angels sang
The night that Christ was born,
Or if only the night wind swelled and sighed
Round the stable eaves forlorn?
The night wind is the voice of God,
As much as an angel's horn.

What if the Star of Bethlehem
That shone so far, so bright—
Were only the star of eventide
That shines on us every night?
Each shining star is God's own sign—
Who made the dark and the light.

What matters it, if the sweet Babe came
By miracle from on high,
Or child of woman and of man,
Just as you and I?
The wonder was the life He led,
And the death that He did die.

ENVOI

Although I hold from thee no wingèd lyre,
With which to sing thy praise, fair Poetry,
Though, when thy beauty touches me with fire,
Still am I silent, dumb in ecstasy.
Though I can hear thy rhythms in the wind,
And see thee in the river's curving flow,
And yet the earnest effort of my mind
But offers metres faltering and slow.
Still do I lend my life to thy high ways,
For thee I tend the rose beside my door,
That fills with graciousness the summer days,
And, drawing deep, from thine own treasured store,
I show my children all thy lyric joys,
That while their bodies strong and lissome grow,
Their hearts may feel thy movements and thy poise,
And in their eyes, thy mirrored beauties glow,
Though to the world no silver song I give,
Still day by day, my poetry I live.

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